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Volume 1

Issue 2 *State Medicine*

Article 7

1939

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Recommended Citation

Fisher, Robert K. (1939) "The Dog and His Diet," *Iowa State University Veterinarian*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 7.

Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol1/iss2/7

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The Dog and His Diet

ROBERT K. FISHER

An important item in keeping a dog healthy is his diet. The popular idea that a dog is sort of an animated garbage can, capable of subsisting on foraged odds and ends or scraps thrown to him, is extremely erroneous. To be sure some dogs are forced to accommodate themselves to such an existence, but obviously well-bred animals are too delicate to withstand this life for long.

The feeding of puppies is very important and can not be given too much consideration. Puppies on the average will nurse the bitch from five to eight weeks after being whelped. About the third or fourth week the puppies should be started on some other food along with the bitches milk. Where it is at all possible puppies should be weaned gradually. This does away with the howling, yelping puppy and saves the purchaser of a young dog a lot of grief. To start out with the young puppies should be given two or three small feeds per day of milk to which cream and a beat-up egg have been added. The cream and egg are added to bring the fat and protein content up somewhere near the level of the bitches milk as cow's milk is much lower in fat and protein content. The following chart will illustrate my point.

	Water	Fat	Protein	Sugar
Bitch	75	12.5	7	3.5
Cow	87	4	4	5
Woman	88	3	2	7
Ewe	80	8	6	4
Mare	90	1	2	7
Cat	82	3	9	5
Rabbit	70	10	15	2
Goat	86	5	4	4

*After August J. and Albert E. Racini

About the beginning of the fourth week the bitch may be excluded from the puppies for a short time in the morning and again in the afternoon. At this time some

well cooked oatmeal may be fed along with the milk. By this time the puppies should have begun to like their new food and by the fifth week may be allowed to taste meat. The meat should be scraped and fed well shredded; the amount of meat depending upon the breed and size of the puppies. Ground meat should never be fed as it balls up in the stomach and is slowly digested. Puppies should never be fed too much at any one time but fed small quantities at frequent intervals. A full, well-fed puppy seldom howls.

Fecal Examination

Sometime during the first two months of a puppy's life a fecal examination should be run for parasite ova. Puppies at this age are usually infested with various species of intestinal parasites. In order to develop into good sturdy, healthy dogs they should be treated specifically for these parasites.

From two and a half to three months of age the proper diet is determined by the environment in which the puppies are being raised. Obviously a shepard puppy raised in a city should have a different menu from one brought up in the country and allowed to run at will. The country puppy, receiving abundant exercise, sunshine and air, requires a proportionally larger amount of meat than the city puppy. However, in either case the puppy should have four meals daily.

Adult Dogs

While many advocate only one meal a day for the adult dog, it seems more advisable to give him a light breakfast in the morning consisting of milk or raw egg beat into milk, followed by a meal of meat and vegetables at night. Where the dog goes all day on an empty stomach gas is apt to form and make him uncomfortable. In small towns or cities where the dog is allowed to run at will it is very often advisable to feed him in the

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morning before letting him out. This tends to do away with dogs going out and tipping garbage cans, and picking up various scraps as he finds them. However, it is a well known fact that all breeds or individuals of a breed cannot be fed alike.

Usually, all things considered, one-third and two parts of the broth with vegetables is a safe arrangement for the larger breeds. Exclusion of the broth is necessary for certain short headed dogs and for toys.

Meat Essential

Dog, by nature, is a carnivorous animal and meat should not be left out of his diet. Fresh meat chopped up into medium sized squares are very satisfactory. If frozen meat is being fed great care should be taken to have the meat well thawed out before feeding. If not it is very apt to lead to gastro-intestinal troubles and diarrhea. It has long been advocated that liver should not be fed to dogs. This statement is erroneous as liver can and does play a very important role in the dogs diet. Liver supplies the vitamin B complex which is the anti-black tongue factor. Veal or beef liver is the best to feed to the dog as pork liver contains too much fat.

Perhaps one of the best garden stuffs for a dog is cabbage because it contains the largest amount of vitamins, although it is sometimes gas producing and digests slowly. Stewed tomatoes are also good, as they contain not only the vitamins, but iron and iodine as well. Raw tomatoes and carrots in season are even better. Some people go so far in sharing their food with their dog as to give him fruits such as peaches, oranges, bananas and apples. There is no great objection to this providing these foods are very ripe and not fed in excess, but there is always a tendency with a fad of this kind to carry it too far. Whatever a dog is fed, a little dash of salt adds flavor to the food.

Bones

As for bones it is to be admitted that large uncooked ones are excellent for the dogs teeth and digestion. They are the dog's tooth brush. Cooked steak, chicken,

chop or other splintery bones should be excluded. It is possible of course that the dog may take care of these a hundred times without difficulty, but the chances are that some day when the owner is rushed and least expecting trouble a sharp bone will puncture the stomach or intestine of his pet or that a bone will lodge in the throat and cause strangulation before a veterinarian can be summoned.

The dog's digestive tract is not well equipped to digest starch. Therefore, potatoes, bread and gravy should be put on the list of "don't feed."

Water

Water is an important item in the dog's diet. Fresh water should be accessible to the dog at all times. Sulphur and other drugs should never be added to the dog's drinking water. Contrary to superstition such things are of no value, but serve to nauseate the dog. If anything is used it should be lime water, one teaspoonful to one teacupful of water. Even this, however, has no special indication to the healthy dog.

Commercial Feeds

There has been much controversy of late as to the value of feeding dogs prepared canned or dried dog food. To date a great deal of research has been done by the various companies and people interested in the feeding of dogs. It all adds up to the fact that as yet there is not the perfect dog food on the market. But if research continues at the present rate they will no doubt find the proper ration for the average dog. However, any dog food put out by a reputable company at the present time can be fed with a great deal of success. A great many canned and dried dog foods pre-dispose dogs to skin lesions, sterility and many additional obvious symptoms that indicate deficiency disease. Breeders of choice animals may supplement whatever ration they select with 2% or 3% of linoleic or linolenic acid unsaturates, and with one-half to one and one-half mimims of wheat germ oil per dog for the correction of these widespread dystrophies.